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LETTER DATED 9 OCTOBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose herewith the editorial issued by the Chicago Tribune on 8 October 1998 on the American aggression against the Al-shifa pharmaceutical factory on 20 August 1998 (see annex).

The paper stated that America's moral authority has been tarnished by the Sudan attack. Now, more serious questions arise about the President's behaviour, which Clinton needs to answer fully, publicly and without delay.

I should be grateful if you would distribute the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Elfatih ERWA
Permanent Representative

98-30234 (E) 121098

Annex

TOP BRASS LEFT OUT OF THE LOOP? - Editorial

[Latest News From Sudan At Sudan.Net]

News Article by Chicago Tribune on October 08, 1998 at 11:18:01:

TOP BRASS LEFT OUT OF THE LOOP?

Chicago Tribune
October 8, 1998 Editorial

The dust has settled from the American missile attack on the Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan six weeks ago, but the dreadful doubts about the merits of the attack just seem to keep growing. Now troubling new revelations suggest that the decision-making process itself was deeply flawed.

President Clinton insists the Sudanese plant helped make a precursor for VX nerve agent arms. But many Americans, and much of the world, question why he has failed to produce more clear and convincing evidence that it was a legitimate target for reprisal after the terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

This week it was revealed that the administration kept the decision to launch cruise missiles against targets in Sudan and Afghanistan secret from most of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the nation's top military commanders, until the final hours.

A shocking report in the Oct. 12 issue of The New Yorker magazine reported that the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines apparently were not consulted until the last day before Clinton's decision to launch the Tomahawk missiles. While not directly in the chain of command, their advice is traditionally considered vital when operational activities unfold.

The report also suggests Atty. Gen. Janet Reno was overruled when she questioned whether there was enough evidence to link the Sudan facility and the Afghanistan targets--or even the embassy bombings themselves--to Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden, whom Clinton has blamed. It said FBI Director Louis Freeh, who went to Africa with hundreds of his agents to investigate the Aug. 7 bombings, was kept out of the planning for the missile strikes.

The reports undoubtedly will rekindle speculation that Clinton was looking to divert attention from his domestic troubles. His national security team did consult with the CIA, the State Department and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Henry Shelton. But might the White House have deliberately avoided consulting with all the Joint Chiefs because it knew they might oppose elements of the attack?

Americans have a right to demand that their government retaliate in response to terrorist attacks, but the government must be sure of the facts and the targets before doing so. Sadly, America's moral authority has been tarnished by the Sudan attack. Now, more serious questions arise about the President's behavior that Clinton needs to answer fully, publicly and without delay.